

CHALLENGES FACED BY STREET VENDORS

Dr. B. Manickavasagam^{1*}

¹ Assistant Professor, Dept., of Sociology, Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Chidambaram.

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ABSTRACT

Street vendors are often those who are unable to get regular jobs in the remunerative formal sector on account of their low level of education and skills. They try to solve their livelihoods problems through their own meager financial resource. They are the main distribution channel for a large variety of products of daily consumption like fruits, vegetables, readymade garments, shoes, household gadgets, toys, stationery, newspapers, and magazines and so on. If they were to be eliminated from the urban markets, it would lead to a severe crisis for fruit and vegetable farmers, as well as small scale industries which cannot afford to retail their products through expensive distribution networks in the formal sector. This Research paper “Challenges of Woman Street Vendors in Cuddalore Town” is to elucidate the experiencing challenges of women Street vendors in Cuddalore Town, at the same time, to bring about the role and capacity of women to face the false opinion of the public that woman are weaker section and they have less capacity in involving social upliftment. A women Street vendor is basically self-employed private individual, bent upon making a living by honest means with a genuine concern to supplement the meager family income in the face of escalating inflation that is inflicting many hardships.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the National policy on urban street vendors, Department of urban development and poverty alleviation, “a street vendor is broadly defined as a person who offers goods or services for sale to the public without having a permanent built-up structure but with a temporary static structure or mobile stall. Street vendors may be stationary by occupying space on the pavements or other public/ private areas, or may be mobile, in the sense, that they move from place to place carrying their wares on push carts or cycles or baskets on their heads, or may sell their wares in moving bus etc.”

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* **Corresponding Author:** Dr. B. Manickavasagam, 121muthu121@gmail.com

The ministry of urban development and poverty alleviation in its declaration in 1990 states, “There are one crore vendors in India, contributing to Over 50% of country’s saving and 63% of the GDP comes from vendors”. This might have risen by this time. Such an income shareholders of Indian economy the street vendors, are seen as “encroachers’ and as public nuisance’ who obstruct traffic.”

Women street vendors in Cuddalore Town play a very important role by generating employment and income generation. The reason behind the increase of women street vendors now –a- days may be seen as a means of survival and livelihood strategy. Because they have large household to sustain, for, the cost of living is increased to which they could not cope up with. Women street vendor face many problems as they are vulnerable population, who are neither protected by the government, NGO’s labour unions nor by any labour laws. Though the Government passed “street vendors Bill 2013” yet they are deprived by laws and their rights are not protected. In this paper let us allow our minds to have special consideration on the challenges they face every day and by appreciating their participation in representing a significant share in alleviating poverty and contributing to the high levels of enjoyment. On the background of their demographic background, let me also put forth some valuable solutions to their challenges in order to protect women street vendors on the human right perspective.

1.1 Review of Literature

Brate Aloysives Gunadi (2013) conducted a study focusing on the “Vulnerability of street vendors in Java”. The study found that most of the street vendors, especially the woman vendors experience vulnerability at the higher level. Vulnerability also varies across the locations of vending.

Breman J. (1995) sadly register his views that neither the government statistics nor the other official censuses do not bring out the excessive vulnerability of the self-employed in general and the progressive marginalization of women in particular. Thus there is no proper data’s maintained about the problems regarding women vendors.

The modern economic sector has no way to provide sufficient employment opportunities, as a consequence of which large number of persons enter into self-employment activities like vending pan, cigarette, Bidi etc. which are social taboos. (Ramachandran K.1989)

Women street vendors come under the informal sector. They are restricted trade activities on the grounds of public security, cause traffic congestion, on the issues of social taboo (selling of pan, cigarette, bidee etc) garbage accumulation which leads to hazards, illegal use of public place etc. (Ramachandran K.1989)

Debdulalsana (2013) studied the street vendor’s interms of their decent work and emphasized the role of organization/ Union in providing the decent work culture. His study explores the street vendors mainly depend on money lenders for their economic and social security purposes. There is no safety for the street vendors in their work place. They have to face severe harassment from the local authorities.

Since the women education is less in Cuddalore District, the mother in the family becomes the second bread winner, entering into small business in order to sustain the large household to equate the insufficient income. Here in this context, we should see gender as a social role to play implicitly. Hessian (2012) says that what a men and women do is socially

learned behavior and their activities are associated vice versa. Thus we can conclude that women's roles are much essential and important in production.

The Job searching women migrants form rural and semi-rural areas and their demographic, social and economic characteristics of their migration and earnings are demonstrated in some of the research works. Analysis of these research works bring out how these women are victimized by politicians, local authorities and police when they sell out various products on the streets. The negative and lethargic attitude of the local authorities towards women street vendors in providing license is also highlighted in research. Around 95% of the women street vendors are subject to continuous harassment through extortion or eviction (Renu V.2005).

1.2 Laws that Project the Protection of Rights Women

In this situation, the rights of the women to be considered seriously. Women in India are being provided with legal security to secure their economic, social and cultural lives. National Commission for Women Act 1990 shows special efforts made by the Indian Government in interest of women's right to safeguard their life. The emergence of "women's economic, social and cultural rights" movement attempts to look at the broader issues faced by women namely poverty, unemployment, education, water, food, security, trade etc and thus to create equality in all the sphere of women's lives. Women's economic opportunity in India is rapidly changing landscape as women are not less than any man in every sector whether it may be organized or unorganized. The exposure is needed for the women in unorganized sector.

- *Article 39(a)* of Indian constitution declares "state policy to be directed to securing for men and women equally, right to an adequate means of livelihood"
- *Article-39(d)* says "equal pay for equal work for both men and women"
- *Article-14* ensures to women the right of equality.
- *Article-15(1)* prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex.
- *Article-15(3)* provides for affirmative and positive action which indicate the women's right of livelihood and equal wages and so on
- *Article-16* provides for equality of opportunity to all
- The protection of women from violence of Act 2005 and the protection of civil rights Act 1955 are also in supporting the rights of women in the society.

In the case women street vendors, those laws and policies also applicable and the society to be educated attitudinal changes in favour of women by empowering the state to make special provision for them. "Respect women, respect world. One who abuses a lady is the biggest coward. Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in this world" (Hilary Rodham Clinton). Whatever the causes may be, it is the duty of every human being to protect the human rights of those who are victims especially poor women street vendors.

DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

The present study primarily relied on field data. The study was conducted in Cuddalore Town only and was limited to street vending alone. Though there are men, women and child vendors, the researcher took only women street vendors, because my concern was only the women folk to go into the complete detail of their vulnerabilities and insecurities and challenges.

A detailed literature review followed by field level study, the required information was collected, primarily through scheduled questionnaires and detailed interviews of concerned category of women vendors. Sample selection was through a stratified proportionate random sampling method to have Women Street vendors drawn from various categories. The researcher has identified 84 women street vendors randomly. The methodology of the present study involved qualitative and quantitative research methods. The collected information from the respondents is statistically processed and simple percentage tables and nominal scale were made to analyze the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table – 1: *Socio – Economic Characteristics of the Respondents*

(N = 84)

Variables	Characteristics	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Age Group	20-30 Years	57	67.86
	30-40 years	18	21.43
	Above 40	9	10.71
Education	Illiterates	13	15.48
	Primary	20	23.80
	Middle School	17	20.24
	Higher Education	22	26.19
	Graduate	12	14.29
Religion	Christian	26	30.95
	Hindu	47	55.95
	Muslim	11	13.10
Marital Status	Married	57	67.86
	Unmarried	8	9.52
	Widowed	15	17.56
	Divorced	4	4.76
Income Level	Below 3000	19	22.62
	3000-5000	9	10.71
	Above 5000	56	66.67
Family Type	Joint Family	29	34.52
	Nuclear Family	55	65.48
Housing Status	Owned	35	41.67
	Rented	49	58.33

Source: *Primary Data*

The above table shows the Socio-Economic conditions of the respondents.

- In that age category of the respondents, 57 (67.86%) are between 20-30 years and above 40 years are 9 (10.71%) and 18 (21.43%) are between 30-40 years.
- Regarding the education status of the respondents was amazing that 22 (26.19%) are finished their higher education and about 12 (14.29%) are degree holders. Only 13 (15.48%) are seemed to be illiterate and 20 (23.80%) have finished their primary level education and 17 (20.24%) have reached their middle school level.
- With respect to the religious level of the respondents show 47 (55.95%) belong to Hindu, 26 (30.95%) belong to Christian and only 11 (13.10%) follow the Muslim.
- Marital status of the respondents reveal that most of the respondents, 57 (67.86%) are married and only 8 (9.52%) are unmarried. 15 (17.86%) are widowed and 4 (4.76%) are divorced.
- We work to earn for the livelihood. The respondents about 56 (66.62%) are earning above Rs.5000/- and 9 (10.71%) are earning between Rs3000/-to Rs.5000/- and 19 (22.62%) are earning below Rs.3000/-
- In Family type majority of respondents are nuclear type 55 (65.48%) and 29 (34.52%) are in the joint-family setup.
- Due to vending, many come from the rural areas to the urban. In this way 49 (58.33%) of the respondents come and stay in the rented house in Cuddalore and about 35 (41.67%) are living in their own houses.

Table – 2: *Distribution of the Respondents by Types of Vending*

Types of Vending	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Food	14	16.67
Fruits	13	15.48
Vegetables	17	20.23
Flowers	8	9.53
Cloths & Accessories	10	11.90
Plastic products	6	7.14
Fish	11	13.10
Cosmetics & Decorative Items	5	5.95
Total	84	100

Source: *Primary Data*

In the above table shows, the researcher have chosen only 8 types of vending for my convenient and the members also distributed according to the majority of the vending shops. In that, vegetable vendors seems to be more 17 (20.23%) shows the need of the public usage. Food vendors 14 (16.67%) indicate the quantity of the consumers are more. Fruits vendors 13 (15.48%), Fish vendors 11 (13.10%), Cloths & Accessories 10 (11.90%), Flowers 8 (9.53%) show the remarkable earning ways of the most vendors. Though the plastic products 6 (7.14%), and cosmetics & decorative items 5 (5.95%) are less in number show the less usage of the public.

Table – 3: *Distribution of the Respondents by Challenges Faced*

Challenges Faced	Very High	High	To Some Extend
Fear of municipal and higher authorities	47 (55.95%)	22 (26.19%)	15 (17.86%)
Fear of customer's misbehaving and Bargaining	24 (28.57%)	37 (44.05%)	23 (27.38%)
Inadequate shade, Sanitation, drinking water & electricity	38 (45.24%)	32 (38.10%)	14 (16.66%)
Difficult to get vending license, Charged Heavily for permit	33 (39.29%)	29 (34.52%)	22 (26.19%)
Environmental Hazards	41(48.81%)	27 (32.14%)	16 (19.05%)
Health problems	47 (55.95%)	22 (26.19%)	15 (17.86%)
Eviction	24 (28.57%)	37 (44.05%)	23 (27.38%)
Wastage of unsold goods	29 (34.52%)	23 (27.38%)	32 (38.10%)
Feeling insecure, Irregular Employment	52 (61.90%)	20 (23.81%)	12 (14.29%)
Heavy Competition between vendors	33 (39.29%)	29 (34.52%)	22 (26.19%)
Online Shopping an adverse impact	24 (28.57%)	37 (44.05%)	23 (27.38%)
Bribes, Penalties, Imprisonment	47 (55.95%)	22 (26.19%)	15 (17.86%)

Source: *Primary Data*

The above table shows the respondent's challenges that they experience in their daily life cycle. Their major problems are chosen for the study.

(a) Fear of Municipal & Higher Authorities

It is a very high challenge to more than half of the respondents 47 (55.95%) and 22 (26.19%) of them felt as high challenge and the rest 15 (17.86%) of them are facing it to some extent. Encroachment of the roadsides, no vending license, garbage accumulation etc. is some of the causes of their fear at the presence of the higher officials.

(b) Fear of Customer's Misbehaviors & Bargaining

It would be by the drunkard persons, who try to harass them by words and action, even bargaining makes them hurt mentally. It is a very high challenge to 24(28.57%) respondents and 37(44.05%) of them felt as high challenge and the rest 23(27.38%) of them are facing it to some extent.

(c) Inadequate Shade, Sanitation, Drinking Water, Electricity

On the roadsides one cannot expect the above said amenities, rather can be provided if they are placed in a fixed place. And so, It is a very high challenge to 38(45.24%) respondents and 32(38.10%) of them felt as high challenge and the rest 14(16.66%) of them are facing it to some extent.

(d) Difficult to Get Vending License, Charged Heavily for Permit

License is a prerequisite for the vending. But it is not easy for the ordinary seasonal vendors to get it without paying much money to the officials. That's why, It is a very high

challenge to 33(39.29%) respondents and 29(34.52%) of them felt as high challenge and the rest 22(26.19%) of them are facing it to some extent.

(e) Environmental Hazards

Of course sudden and unexpected heavy storm, rain, summer hot sunlight etc. are really a challenge to women street vendors. They were already uncertain of their livelihood, and these hazards may bring much hardship for their living. That's why, It is a very high challenge to most of 41(48.81%) respondents and 27(32.14%) of them felt as high challenge and the rest 16(19.05%) of them are facing it to some extent.

(f) Health Problems

Health problems like esinophilia, dengue, fever, cough, stomach ache, malaria, lung diseases due to over dust etc. are very common among these vendors. It is a very high challenge to more than half of the respondents 47(55.95%) and 22(26.19%) of them felt as high challenge and the rest 15(17.86%) of them are facing it to some extent.

(g) Eviction

It is the removal of selling goods or working space from the vendors without prior information. . It is a very high challenge to 24(28.57%) respondents and 37(44.05%) of them felt as high challenge and the rest 23(27.38%) of them are facing it to some extent.

(h) Wastage of Unsold Goods

Types of vending taken for the study show the goods are liable for wastage, if not sold at required time. That is the reason, It is a very high challenge to 29(34.52%) respondents and 23(27.38%) of them felt as high challenge and the rest 32(38.10%) of them are facing it to some extent.

(i) Feeling Insecure and Irregular Employment

The growing big departmental stores, online shopping, delivery of goods at door steps, credit system and such causes naturally would bring the feeling of insecure and unemployment in the mind set of women vendors. That is the reason, It is a very high challenge to most of the 52(61.90%) respondents and 20(23.81%) of them felt as high challenge and the rest 12(14.29%) of them are facing it to some extent.

(j) Heavy Competition Between Vendors

Women street vendors are not facing challenges from outside only, but also internal challenges especially when their goods are in very low demand due to low standard and selling the goods at low price to manage the competition between vendors and between wholesale and retail shops. So It is a very high challenge to most of the 33(39.29%) respondents and 29(34.52%) of them felt as high challenge and the rest 22(26.19%) of them are facing it to some extent.

(k) Online Shopping an Adverse Impact

It is a very high challenge to 24(28.57%) respondents and 37(44.05%) of them felt as high challenge and the rest 23(27.38%) of them are facing it to some extent.

(I) Bribes, Penalties, Imprisonment

It is a very high challenge to more than half of the respondents 47 (55.95%) and 22 (26.19%) of them felt as high challenge and the rest 15 (17.86%) of them are facing it to some extent.

FINDINGS

- The age group between 20-30 years has involved much in vending.
- Most of the women respondents have finished their higher education. It shows the prevalence of unemployment.
- Hindu population in our country is so high and naturally Hindu women involving in vending are not a surprise one. But Muslim women involve in vending is surprise.
- The majority of the married women involve in vending shows the inability to run the family with one earning of the husband.
- Most of them earn above Rs.5000/- which means that the customer's interest on buying goods in vending shops.
- Unlike the nuclear, joint family may adjust each other when the unexpected expenses occurred. So most of the women in nuclear families involve in vending.
- In towns and cities, it is very hard to buy a land and build a house with low income. Living in a low rented house is so convenient. So most of the respondents chose to live in a rented house.
- With regard to their challenges, many things need to be noted;
- Harassment by municipal and local higher authorities by way of eviction, bribes, penalties, imprisonment and heavy charges were pointed out by the respondents as their major challenges.
- Health problems also brought out as their challenge.
- Their expectation of adequate shade, sanitation, drinking water and electricity in order to face environmental hazards and health problems to be taken seriously.
- Feeling of insecure/irregular employment replicate the respondent's fear of unprotected living.
- Online shopping is hindering their small scale employment.
- They also were complaining about the competition among themselves to be managed by selling their goods in low price.

MAJOR SUGGESTIONS

- A new social policy to be enacted for the welfare of the women vendors.
- Free Education can be given to the children of women street vendors.
- Vending can be made as legal one.
- The government can create a separate ministry or special cell to look after the welfare of the workers in the unorganized sector under which the street vending falls.
- Fixed amount be charged to get license for vending, so that bribing to various authorities can be stopped.
- Vending is the alternative means of livelihood amidst the unemployment problem. So the government should allow and protect the women street vendors to carryout the vending without the harassment of any type.

- Authorities should take necessary steps to provide vending license and the proof of identity to the women vendors to vend in specific areas.
- Establishment of women street vendors association would be helpful to develop their capacities.
- The government or the local authorities should form separate cell to meet the grievances of the women street vendors.
- There should be a proper documentation of women street vendors in order to eliminate their unstructured manner and to assist them, follow them regularly.
- The Government through its proper ministry should conduct skill training programmes to them to enrich their capacities.
- Bank loans can be arranged at free rate of interest to start new business.
- The Government should take effort to place permanent sheds with minimum facilities such as toilets, drinking water, lighting, first aid etc.
- The local authorities and the public should treat them respectfully, praising their service at our door steps. They should not be viewed as inhuman or nuisance.
- The Government can provide relief funds to them at the time of disasters and natural calamities.
- The local authorities should include them at the time of making town and city master plan.
- Insurance policy can be provided to their goods.

CONCLUSION

A family no more remained a center of production or reproduction. Because of industrialization and urbanization new social norms and values emerged. Job opportunities, economic hardship and favourable social and cultural situation encouraged women to seek employment outside the home. Street vending in India has become surveillance for many people. Poverty and lack of employment opportunities push even the educated girls and women towards towns and cities for work & livelihood. Street vending, has one of the means of earning a livelihood, and it's easy for them with their small scale input and skill, women enters in this type of job to live with dignity and self respect in the society. Though they are exposed to many challenges in vending, yet some good officials and welfare associations help them smooth functioning of vending activities. In spite of different forms of harassment and lack of protection, proportionately female vendors contribute to overall urban economy in terms of employment and cheap availability of goods and services.

From the overall study, the researcher wants to insist at one point that the government should make the vending legal as any of that kind, through the national and international development projects so as to protect and secure the right to livelihood of the Indian Citizen.

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